

**Testimony of Susan Lloyd Yolen, Vice President,
Public Affairs & Communication, Planned Parenthood of Connecticut
March 16, 2009, Public Health Committee
Raised Bill 6675, An Act Increasing Access to Health Care in Connecticut**

Good morning, Senator Harris, Representative Ritter and members of the committee, and thank you for this opportunity to address Raised Bill 6675. My name is Susan Yolen and I am the Vice President for Public Affairs & Communication for Planned Parenthood of Connecticut, the state's largest provider of family planning and reproductive health care.

Throughout this session, Planned Parenthood has reminded legislators in testimony that in 2005 the General Assembly almost unanimously directed the Department of Social Services to apply for a federal 1115 family planning demonstration waiver. Already a mandated benefit under Medicaid, family planning has a **90 cents to the dollar** reimbursement rate...far greater than the federal match for other Medicaid services. It stands to reason that if, under HUSKY, we are helping women to avert additional unintended pregnancies, it makes even greater sense to offer family planning services to low income women, *not yet eligible for Medicaid* but at risk of requiring it if they *became* pregnant and bore a child.

In 2006, DSS did prepare the draft of an excellent family planning waiver request which was returned by CMS for revisions last year. We know that the Obama Administration strongly supports family planning as an essential health service for women of reproductive age as well as a significant cost saving measure. We expect that the new Administration will expand access to family planning, perhaps even making the waiver process unnecessary in the near future.

For women of reproductive age, who are otherwise young and generally healthy, there is no other routine, primary health care but the annual reproductive health visit: a pelvic exam, Pap test, clinical breast exam, and a prescription for a reliable method of birth control. Women of all income levels need access to this basic preventive care. Moreover, according to the Guttmacher Institute *four public dollars are saved for every public dollar spent on family planning*. Already during the current economic crisis, job loss and associated loss of insurance coverage is demonstrating that Connecticut's women and families are being challenged to find the resources to pay for monthly contraceptive supplies. For most families, the timing could not be worse for an unplanned pregnancy.

Twenty seven states have already reaped the benefits of a family planning expansion. Implementation of such a waiver here in Connecticut would likewise save our state millions of dollars. The Guttmacher Institute estimates on the chart below, that establishing parity between the Medicaid eligibility level for family planning and the level for pregnancy-related care (250% of FPL) in Connecticut would result in state net savings of \$15.5 million by the third year.

- Establishing parity between the Medicaid eligibility level for family planning and the level for pregnancy-related care in **Connecticut** would result in:

Expansion participants:	39,900
Unplanned pregnancies averted:	5,800
Abortions averted:	2,300
Medicaid-funded births averted:	2,700
Savings from Medicaid-funded births averted:	\$ 33.2 million
Cost of expansion program:	\$ 7.7 million
Total net savings:	\$ 25.5 million

Federal savings:	\$ 9.9 million
State savings:	\$ 15.5 million

Note: Data are the estimated annual impact of an expansion by the third year. In 2006, when this study was conducted, the income ceiling for Medicaid coverage was 157% of poverty, while the ceiling for pregnancy-related care was 185% of poverty.

We ask that this committee include access to reproductive health care as a high priority as you consider the impact of Bill 6675. We ask that the Department of Social Services be required to forward Connecticut's family planning waiver request to CMS by upon passage of this bill or by July 1, 2009. We believe this is achievable since the waiver application is virtually ready to go and has been for some time.

Thank you for your consideration of the reproductive health needs of Connecticut's women.